The Cheerful Letter

EVERY PLACE A CHURCH; EVERY DAY THE LORD'S DAY; ALL EVENTS BLESSINGS; ALL JOY THANKSGIVING; AND ALL NATURE AND LIFE FULL OF GOD.—*James Freeman Clarke.*

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THE CHEERFUL LETTER.

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THE SPIRIT'S DEALINGS WITH THE HEART.

Sweet Spirit! would thy breath divine
O'er a void waste all fragrant blow?
Bright Presence! would that fire of thine
All lonely in thy temple glow?

Thou dost not, sure, an empty heart
For thy dear dwelling-place desire;
To glorify thy holy art
Thou dost a peopled realm require.

Each mounting thought, each strong desire
Help on thy heavenly wings to rise,
And light in hearts with love on fire
Thine own pure flame that never dies.

Oh, lend our hope's dim, dying light
The steadfast glory of thy flame,
And grant our joy, divinely bright,
The witness of thy smile to claim.

Take all this heart, its wealth, its powers,
Its yearnings soft, its longings high,
Its bleeding wounds, its golden hours,
And on them all thy sweet skill try.

Oh, breathe on them thy breath divine!
Oh, steep them in thy heavenly glow!
Nor let one smile unhallowed shine,
Nor let one tear unhallowed flow.

—*T. H. Gill.*

SELF-CONSECRATION.

I.

It must not be supposed that the mode in which this love of God is raised to its rightful pre-eminence can ever be (as often imagined) by *lowering* our human affections till piety is left standing highest, simply because there is not another high one left to rival it. This is among the driest of fanaticisms. We *never* love our fellow-creatures too much. We love them *selfishly*, craving to engross their whole hearts to ourselves; love them *immorally*, making their smiles the goal of our virtue; love them *idolatrously*, keeping down our moral ideal to the level of their defects. But never do we truly LOVE them too much. Of pure, true, tender, unselfish love there is never too much in any human heart. Nay, there is no possibility that any creature in the universe will ever feel too strongly that holy sentiment which swells in its uttermost fulness even the infinite heart of God. Millenniums hence among the stars, so far from having outgrown love, as if it were a part of the weakness of mortality, we shall find it risen in our souls to a majestic power, an ineffable beauty, of which we can form no vision now. It is *more* love for our fellows that we want, not one shadow of a shade the less.

But what, then, of the love of God? How are we to make that the chief of all? Oh, slow of heart that we are! How long it takes us to find that love is no coin of earth, to be divided among so many and no more! to be given in such and such shares, each share diminishing the remainder! Nay, but cannot that fire of heaven light a thousand hearts and burn the brighter for all that it kindles? There must always be an ingredient of evil, a selfward, narrowing spirit, in every love which tends toward the absorption and extinguishing of other pure affections. It is not love, it is selfishness, which asks our friend to love others less that he may love us more. The

more we truly love one, the more we are *able* to love one another. And above all, and in a double sense, the more we love our fellow-creatures, the more we are *able* and the more we are *permitted* to love God. As I have already shown, there is no one way by which we can so well prepare our hearts for divine communion as by human affections, nor are there any souls so often visited by God's Spirit as those which "dwell in love" with his creatures.

To fulfil, then, the great canon of religious duty, it is not needful to sever or to loosen even the very tenderest of social ties. We are not called on to overthrow the sweet homes of our earthly affections, that so over the desolate ruins may be erected the solitary trophy of God's victory. Rather must we build upon their *summits* the heaven-soaring dome of piety, binding and over-hallowing the whole.

Truly it is a pitiful notion that which takes for granted the impossibility of our ever loving God any better than we commonly do, and on the strength of this assumption teaches us that, if we desire to make his love paramount in our hearts, there is no resource open to us but forthwith to cut down every other love, so that at least it may stand alone. Surely there are two better lessons than this to be drawn from a true study of our nature. By learning to love man better, shall we not learn how to love God better? By learning to know God better, shall we not at least kindle in these ice-cold hearts some degree of *positive* warmth toward him, some sentiment whose sole importance in our souls shall not be (like that of a dwindled shrub in a desert) derived only from the solitude in which it stands? The notion that the supremacy of Divine Love is to be secured by the diminution, or even destruction, of human affections has tended to make the whole idea of self-consecration one not only of self-sacrifice (that is, of the sacrifice of the unlawful desires of the *lower* self), but of universal sacrifice,—the oblation of all that is in itself *good* in ourselves and those belonging to us, no less than of all that is evil. From this sort of error have arisen the world-wide miseries of solitary asceticism, and the less obvious, but hardly less injurious, mistake of the Protestant devotee, who tasks himself to chill the sweet affections in whose growth the spiritual life itself can alone find health and vigor.

All such ideas of sacrifice as these, necessarily involve the attribution to God of a character the most remote from his own. The egotism of the man who desires to narrow his friend's whole heart and mind to himself, the rapacious jealousy of a despot,—these are the images of Deity inevitably erected in the mind which seeks to please God by the oblation of the natural affections and social ties of humanity. It cannot be too often repeated that the laws of our nature are *God's* laws. *He* has given us the noble light of intellect, and made all its rays converge into one pencil of light, pointing forever to his goodness and his wisdom. *He* has given us the blessed power of love, and made it the ladder on whose angel-peopled steps we may climb up toward himself, where he stands on its heavenly summit. To say that *he* requires us to quench that light that we may see him more clearly, to break every round of that ladder that we may ascend to him more securely,—is not this the extreme of all folly?

Self-consecration must be a different thing from this, if it be an act acceptable to the Creator of man's mind and heart. We can no more please him by spoiling his work and counteracting the ends for which he made it than we can please a mechanician by shattering his machine, a musician by untuning his instrument. To make our offering fit for God's altar we must make it "*perfect after its kind*," strong, fair, and spotless. It is a thoroughly *human* life God requires us to lead,—not the life of some angel of our fancy, but of the man or woman God has designed each of us to be. Every limb of our God-made bodies, every faculty of our God-made minds, every affection of our God-made hearts, is to be used, developed, strengthened, purified, and then *hallowed*,—hallowed in the use, not in the destruction.—*Frances Power Cobbe, in "Religious Duty."*

THE STILL HOUR.

FOR A DEVOTED LIFE.

O Thou who hearest prayer, give me a prayerful spirit, and draw my heart into a true communion with thee. It is not by my words that my thought is known to thee; for thou seest my inmost heart, thou knowest my most secret desire. Oh, may thy law so rule within me that these thoughts,

these desires, may be as a true prayer, raising me to a nearer union of spirit with thee, and preparing me to receive the blessings which only thou canst send.

Help me, O heavenly Father, to make my life a true offering of devotion. May gratitude for every joy, patience under every trial, and diligence in my daily work be the willing service of my heart and hand. And by all my experience may the treasure of my spiritual life be increased. Oh, shew me how I may share with others the good gifts which thou hast intrusted to me, not for myself alone. May there shine even in my life some faint reflection of the infinite wisdom and perfect love of thy providence. Keep me in the sacred bond of fellowship with thy children of every nation and in every age. Touch me with a deep pity for the sinful, with tender sympathy for the tried and sorrowful. Save me from the evil of a cold and selfish or a careless spirit.

Finding thee in everything that is true and fair and good, may my earthly home ever become more dear to me. Loving it for what there is in it of heaven, may I be ready when thou callest me to leave it, trusting still to thy guidance, secure in the shelter of thy love.

O help me, Father, to live in the light of a faith and hope like this. Fix my heart on heaven and heavenly things. Teach me the true meaning and purpose of my life. Help me to live in the spirit of my prayer.—*Alone to the Alone.*

THE BOOK AND MAGAZINE CLUB.

[*Send all offers and requests for this department to Mrs. W. B. Nichols, 80 Goffe Street, Quincy, Mass.*]

REQUESTS.

1. *Dear Cheerful Letter Friends,*—My mother has been a member of the Cheerful Letter Club for many years. We wish to thank the many friends that have so kindly remembered us with reading. I am anxious to obtain the book called "St. Elmo," and I should be exceedingly grateful to receive any books of standard work or books that will assist in self-education or improvement. (Miss) Ethel Crogan, Winterport, Maine, Route 1.

2. Mrs. Nancy J. Burch, Verdiersville, Virginia, will be grateful for music for the organ.

3. Mrs. S. B. Taylor, Reck, Indian Territory, asks for reading suitable for young girls.

4. Frank Deitz, Bryson City, North Carolina, a young lad, would like reading.

5. I will be so glad if some one will send me the *Outlook* for 1906. I am very fond of reading. Mrs. Lydia M. Creecy, Blaine, Oregon.

6. Mrs. Nina Thomas, Elamsville, Virginia, asks reading for her three little girls.

7. Mrs. Ellen Bradburn, Reck, Indian Territory, will be grateful for a book of poems for herself, and any reading for her boy of eleven summers.

8. Mrs. Malvina Kirby, Wadesboro, North Carolina, asks for "Barriers Burned Away" and "Opening a Chestnut Burr."

9. Victoria Sylvester, Bayou Chêne, Louisiana, will be glad of books or magazines.

10. Clara Brown, Tom Bean, Texas, asks for current numbers of *McCall's Magazine.*

11. Mrs. Sue Quisenberry, Youngs, Virginia, will be grateful for current *Outlook* or *Youth's Companion.*

12. Mrs. Ella Griggs, Spencer, Virginia, would be pleased to receive reading for school-children.

13. Mrs. Annie L. Wright, Dodson, Virginia, asks for suitable books for young girls.

14. The *Youth's Companion* is asked for by Madge Grant, Idem, Virginia.

15. Mrs. Sallie Carnes, Cheraw, South Carolina, asks for magazines.

16. Lillian Simpson, Tatum, Virginia, will be glad of any reading.

17. Mrs. Joseph E. Broadaway, Polkton, North Carolina, asks for reading which she will pass on.

18. Mrs. Carrie Clanton, Moore's Mill, Virginia, will be grateful for reading.

19. Mrs. Ira Coleman, Lenora, Kansas, will appreciate reading matter.

THE MOTHERS' COUNCIL.

LET THE DAUGHTERS HELP.

The verses in the July *Cheerful Letter* "*Home from School,*" naturally lead to the subject of daughters and home duties. Is it not, in many cases, the fault of the mother

when the daughter does not relieve her of home cares? My observation leads me to think that this is often the case.

If a daughter is gently taught as a child to do all the little things that are in her power, she will grow naturally into her right place, and will relieve her mother of many cares when she is grown up. But, when the mother is a capable, efficient woman, she too often loses sight of the important end in the present trivial occasion.

A child of ten cannot be expected to accomplish any household duty so well as a competent housekeeper of forty. But, in order that she may learn, let her have the practice. That she should be accustomed to happy and affectionate co-operation with her mother is the important thing. That the work should be done exactly right is a secondary matter.

Important enough to put in a separate paragraph is the point that there should be as much commendation and as little blame as possible. When your little girl asks leave to help, encourage her by thanking her at least for the spirit that prompts the offer. If something goes wrong, say "Never mind, dear: better luck next time." If you cannot trust her to wash the breakfast things, let her do *something* to help while you are washing them, and then say: "Thank you, my darling. This saves mamma's time very much. How nice to have a little daughter to help me! By and by you will be able to do the things I do now. When I am older, I shall be more easily tired, but I shall have a good daughter to help me and take care of me."

The child's heart will be full of pride and joy and the eager desire to "help mamma" on all occasions possible. But this spirit may be easily quenched by thoughtlessly repressing the impulse to assist. "There, do go away! I would rather do it myself. See how you have spoiled the tablecloth by setting a wet cup down on it! You are more trouble than help!"

Is not the child's heart and character and her relation to her mother worth more than a clean tablecloth?

I recall an incident which struck me as typical. A young girl, who was earnestly desirous to relieve her mother of household cares, begged to be allowed to attend to some domestic duties which were usually allotted to Saturday morning. Her mother at last consented, though after some persuasion. On Saturday the daughter went, with cheerful alacrity, to attend to these cares. She found that they had all been accomplished the day before. "She came upstairs with her eyes full of tears," said the friend who told me the anecdote. No doubt it was a keen disappointment.

The habit of thinking that we must do everything ourselves, or it will not be done just right, belongs to a certain type of character which in its healthy condition is a very fine one. "Whatever is worth doing at all is worth doing well," is its motto. There is a good side to this. To wash a teacup, to make a buttonhole, to write a note, in the very best way, is a good thing. To be accurate in statement, to keep accounts perfectly, to pay small debts promptly, are good habits that go with this type of character. But every virtue may be carried to excess, and so become a fault. And the expenditure of time and strength on trifles, when time and strength may be better employed, is the danger of this type. I will end with one more anecdote, drawn from life.

A woman who could scarcely help doing *everything* as well as it could be done once found it necessary to buy a new parlor carpet,—a serious business in most families of moderate means. After spending some days in a careful examination of carpets, and after making many visits to the chief carpet shops in the city, she made a selection. She then called a family council. "Are you *perfectly* satisfied?" said she. Her son, who had some sense of humor, said: "Well, let's consider it. *Perhaps, possibly* —there *may* be a carpet somewhere in the city that we should like better than this. But then,"—here he paused, as if to meditate,—"we shouldn't have any mother. I think, on the whole, we had better be satisfied with this carpet, and keep our mother."

Mothers, do remember that you yourselves are more important to your daughters than clothes, food, or furniture. The things seen are temporal: the things unseen are eternal.

L. F. C.

NATURAL HISTORY.

HOW PLANTS MOVE, CLIMB, AND TAKE POSITIONS.

(*Continued.*)

9. Climbing plants afford some of the most curious and most varied illustrations of the movements which plants perform, and in

these it is easy to see what the movements are for. The advantage which a plant gains by climbing is that it may thereby rise higher and get a fuller exposure to the light than it could with the same amount of material if it stood independently. Compare the amount of wood or other material in a tree with that of any climber which has ascended it and made a support of its topmost branches. Plants climb in several ways. Some are

10. *Root-climbers.* These creep up the face of rocks or walls, or the trunks of trees, their stems, as they grow, pressing against the support, and adhering to it by means of numerous rootlets, which they throw out. The end of these rootlets commonly flattens out or expands into a small disk, or holdfast, which adheres to the wall or bark, etc. Ivy—that is, true, or "English," ivy —is a good example of this. Our Poison Ivy and the Trumpet Creeper climb in the same way. There is, perhaps, no more effectual mode of climbing when bare walls or large trunks are the support. In other cases.

11. *Twiners*—that is, *Twining Plants*—have an obvious advantage. To twine spirally round some supporting body is a common mode of climbing. This is done by a movement of the stem itself, not less remarkable in reality than that of the leaflets of the *Desmodium gyrans*, just described, and indeed of similar nature. The Hop and some Honeysuckles twine with the sun. Morning-glory, and all the Bindweeds of the Convolvulus Family, Beans, and indeed most of the common twiners, turn against the sun; that is, from the left to the right hand of the observer.

12. When a twining stem overtops its support, the lengthening shoot is seen thrown over to one side, and usually outstretched. One might suppose it had fallen over by its weight, but it is not generally so. If turned over, say to the north, when first observed, it will probably be found reclining to the south an hour or two later, and an hour later again turned northward; that is, the end of the stem is sweeping round in a circle continually, like the hand of a clock. It keeps on growing as it revolves; but the revolving has nothing to do with the growth, and, indeed, is often so rapid that several complete sweeps may be made before any increase in length could be observed. The time of revolving varies in different species. It also depends upon the weather, being slow or imperceptible when it is cool and more rapid when it is warmer. Sometimes it stops when everything seems favorable, and starts again after a while. The Hop, Bean, and Morning-glory are as quick as any. In a sultry day, and when in full vigor, they commonly sweep round the circle in less than two hours. They move by night as well as by day. When the free summit of a twining stem is outstretched to two feet or more in length, so as to magnify the motion, this is sometimes rapid enough to be actually seen in some part of the circuit.

13. Because twining stems are often twisted more or less, some have supposed that the twisting was the cause of the revolving sweep of the free end. If so, the stem below would in a day or two be likely to twist itself off. And twiners seldom twist much when climbing a smooth and even support. To learn how the sweeps are made, one has only to mark a line of dots along the upper side of the outstretched revolving end of such a stem (say that of the Morning-glory) and to note that, when it has moved round a quarter of a circle, these dots will be on one side; when half round, the dots occupy the lower side; and, when the revolution is completed, they are again on the upper side,—that is, the stem revolves by bowing itself over to one side, is either pulled over or pushed over, or both, by some internal force, which acts in turn all round the stem in the direction in which it sweeps, and so the stem makes its circuits without twisting.

14. So the sweeping round of the stem is a movement like that wonderful one of the leaflets of *Desmodium gyrans*, just described, only slower. And here we see what it is for. The sweeping movement of the stem is the cause of the twining. The stem sweeps round that it may reach some neighboring support. As it grows it sweeps a wider and wider space; that is, reaches farther and farther out. When it strikes against any solid body, like the stalk of a neighboring plant, it is stopped; but the portion beyond the contact is free to move as before, and, continuing to lengthen and to move on, it necessarily winds itself round the support,—that is, *twines*. This is the explanation of twining-climbers.

15. *Leaf-climbers.* Some plants climb by their leaves, either the blade, or more commonly the petiole, hooking or coiling round something within reach. *Clematis*, or Virgin's-bower, is a familiar instance. In

all the common species of Clematis the leaves are compound; and the divisions of the petiole, or at first the young leaflets themselves, bend round the stalks or branches of neighboring plants, or any supporting object not too large to be grasped, and so ascend. *Lophospermum* and *Maurandia* (handsome flowering herbs of the gardens), and one or two other plants of the same family, with simple leaves, climb freely in this way, neatly coiling their leafstalk round any slender support within reach.

16. A rather common cultivated species of Nightshade, *Solanum jasminoides*, is a good example of the same kind. It is interesting to notice how the leafstalks of this plant, which have clasped a support, grow much stouter and firmer than those which have not, becoming three or four times as thick as before,—as if the need of greater strength and rigidity somehow brought it about.

17. A leaf-climber has this advantage over a twiner, that it may reach a given height with less amount of substance. Its stem may rise straight up, and save much in length over the twiner, which has to produce twice or thrice that length of stem in reaching the same elevation, on account of the coils.

18. To understand how leaves or leafstalks lay hold of a support, we must refer back to the Sensitive Plant (Paragraph 2): its leaves and leafstalks, we know, respond to the touch of a foreign body by a movement. So do those of leaf-climbers, only the movement by which they clasp the support is very slow and incited only by prolonged contact. If one of these leafstalks be rubbed for some time with a piece of wood, it will generally respond to the irritation by curving; but it will be two or three days about it, and in two or three days more it may straighten itself, unless the stick is left in contact with the leafstalk, then it will clasp it permanently, making one or perhaps two turns around it, and in time it may thicken and harden. That the climbing in such cases is the result of a movement, however slow, under sensitiveness to touch, is further shown by the behavior of tendrils.

19. Between leaf-climbing and tendril-climbing there is every gradation. In *Gloriosa*, a tropical plant of the Lily Family, the tip of a single leaf extends into a slender hook, for laying hold of anything within reach. In *Nepenthes* (a climbing sort of Pitcher-plant) the tip of the blade grows into a tendril which acts just as does the leafstalk and of the other leaf-climbers: at the end of this a pitcher, with a lid to it, is generally formed. Of this more is to be said hereafter. In that vigorous climber, *Cobœa*, the branching claws and grapples which are used to such effect are merely the upper portion of a compound leaf changing into tendrils. The tendrils of a Pea are similar, but simpler.—"*How Plants Behave*," *Asa Gray*.

A TRIBUTE TO PUSSY.

FROM A WOMAN WHO HAS OWNED 156 CATS: THEIR GOOD QUALITIES.

The person who lately denounced the cat as a menace to health and happiness has roused a chorus of defence for poor pussy.

"During the past thirty years," one indignant woman writes to *Good Housekeeping*, "I have owned 156 cats. I have not kept a cattery nor ever owned a pussy that, as far as I know, had a trace of aristocratic blood. They were just common, every-day cats.

"Twenty-three years of this time was spent on an orange grove in Florida, where we had as many as sixteen cats at a time. Yet the birds made themselves perfectly at home in our grove and on our porches—in spite of the cats.

"On our porches alone, more than one hundred martins—by actual count—made their homes one summer. Just below them, the family and the cats were constantly passing. I will not say that in all those years no cat of ours ever caught a bird; but I do say that no cat of mine ever caught anything like 'fifty birds a year,' with which average the cat critic discredits them.

"One of my best cats, Zoe, was noted for her skill in catching a sort of mole which was very injurious to the roots of orange-trees. People would come miles to beg for one of Zoe's kittens, hoping to find the same ability in the young creature.

"She used to bring in to her babies these moles or a small rabbit, sometimes a mouse or a little snake, sometimes a monstrous grasshopper. I never saw her bring in a bird.

"One season we used an incubator and

raised two hundred little chickens. One cat, Polly, who had a strain of wildcat blood in her, proved a persistent chicken thief, and had to be shot. I had no trouble whatever with the other dozen or so.

"You have read of 'the plume hunters of Florida,' and how every year they shoot thousands of mother birds, leaving tens of thousands of young birds to die of slow starvation. An old cattleman once told me that it was heart-breaking to hear their agonizing cries, growing each day fainter.

"It is for the decoration of our tender-hearted (!) women that this devil's work is done, and yet Mr. Thornton would have us believe that cats are greater sinners. So, evidently, does Dr. Hodge, whose quoted criticisms I brand as unfair.

"He says, 'Most cats have mange.' With all my 156 I never had one case of mange. 'All have catarrh,' and 'most New England cats are continually sneezing.' I lived in Boston several years, and never heard a sneezing New England cat nor one with catarrh, except in epidemics of grip, when my cat would sometimes show symptoms like my own.

"It is true I have taken many mangy and diseased cats to the Animal Rescue League in Boston, but they were unfortunate strays which I found in the streets.

"'All cats are alive with fleas,' says Dr. Hodge. Neglected cats are; but a good flea powder will keep these pests in abeyance, and the dog as a flea producer and mange disseminator will distance a dozen cats any day.

"The common household rat (which gets into our food supplies so constantly) carries as much or more contagion than the cat."—*The Boston Transcript.*

FRANCES POWER COBBE.

HER MOTHER.

Frances Conway was daughter of Captain Thomas Conway of Morden Park. Her father and mother both died whilst she was young, and she was sent to the famous school of Mrs. Devis, in Queen Square, Bloomsbury, and afterward lived with her grandmother, who at her death bequeathed to her a handsome legacy, at Southampton. When her grandmother died, she, being then sixteen years of age, received an invitation from Colonel and Mrs. Champion to live with them and become their adopted daughter. The history of this invitation is rather touching. Mrs. Champion's parents had, many years before, suffered great reverses; and my mother's grandfather had done much to help them, and, in particular, had furnished means for Mrs. Champion to go out to India. She returned after twenty years as the childless wife of the rich and kindly old colonel, the friend of Warren Hastings, who, having been commander-in-chief of the forces of the East India Company, had had a good "shake of the pagoda-tree." She repaid to the grandchild the kindness done by the grandfather; and was henceforth really a mother to my mother, who dearly loved both her and Colonel Champion. In their beautiful house, No. 29 Royal Crescent, she saw all the society of Bath in its palmiest days, Mrs. Champion's Wednesday evening parties being among the most important in the place. My mother's part as daughter of the house was an agreeable one, and her social talents and accomplishments fitted her perfectly for the part. The gentle gayety, the sweet dignity and ease of her manners and conversation, remain to me as the memory of something exquisite, far different even from the best manner and talk of my own or the present generation; and I know that the same impression was always made on her visitors in her old age. I can compare it to nothing but the delicate odor of the dried rose leaves with which her china vases were filled and her wardrobes perfumed.

I hardly know whether my mother was really beautiful, though many of the friends who remembered her in early womanhood spoke of her as being so. To me her face was always the loveliest in the world: indeed it was the one through which my first dawning perception of beauty was awakened. I can remember looking at her as I lay beside her on the sofa, where many of her suffering hours were spent, and suddenly saying, "Mamma, you are so pretty!" She laughed and kissed me, saying, "I am glad you think so, my child"; but that moment really brought the revelation to me of that wonderful thing in God's creation, the *Beautiful!* She had fine features, a particularly delicate, rather thin-lipped mouth; magnificent chestnut hair, which remained scarcely changed in color or quantity till her death at seventy years of age; and the clear, pale complexion and hazel eyes which belong to such hair. She al-

ways dressed very well and carefully. I never remember seeing her downstairs except in some rich dark silk, and with a good deal of fine lace about her cap and old-fashioned *fichu*. Her voice and low laughter were singularly sweet, and she possessed, both in speaking and writing, a full and varied diction which in later years she carefully endeavored to make me share, instead of satisfying myself, in school-girl fashion, with making one word serve a dozen purposes. She was an almost omnivorous reader, and, according to the standard of female education in her generation, highly cultivated in every way,—a good musician with a very sweet touch of the piano, and speaking French perfectly well.

Immediately after their marriage my parents took possession of Newbridge, and my father began earnestly the fulfilment of all the duties of a country gentleman, landlord, and magistrate. My mother, indeed, used laughingly to aver that he "went to jail on their wedding day"; for he stopped at Bristol on the road and visited a new prison, with a view to introducing improvements into Irish jails. It was due principally to his exertions that the county jail, the now celebrated Kilmainham, was afterward erected.

Newbridge having been deserted for nearly thirty years, the woods had been sorely injured and the house and out-buildings dilapidated; but with my father's energy and my mother's money things were put straight, and from that time till his death in 1857 my father lived and worked among his people.

Though often hard pressed to carry out with a very moderate income all his projects of improvements, he was never in debt. One by one he rebuilt or reroofed almost every cottage on his estate, making what had been little better than pig-styes, fit for human habitation; and, when he found that his annual rents could never suffice to do all that was required in this way for his tenants in his mountain property, he induced my eldest brother, then just of age, to join with him in selling two of the pictures which were the heirlooms of the family and the pride of the house,—a Gaspar Poussin and a Hobbema, which last now adorns the walls of Dorchester House. I remember as a child seeing the tears in his eyes as this beautiful painting was taken out of the room in which it had been like a perpetual ray of sunshine. But the sacrifice was completed, and eighty good stone and slate "Hobbema Cottages," as we called them, soon rose all over Glenasmoil. Be it noted by those who deny every merit in an Anglo-Irish landlord that not a farthing was added to the rent of the tenants, who profited by this real act of self-denial.

All this, however, refers to later years. I have now reached to the period when I may introduce myself on the scene. Before doing so, however, I am tempted to print here a letter which my much valued friend, Miss Felicia Skene of Oxford, has written to me, on learning that I am preparing this autobiography. She is one of the very few now living who can remember my mother, and I gratefully quote what she has written of her, as corroborating my own memories, else, perhaps, discounted by the reader as colored by a daughter's partiality.

April 4, 1894.

My dearest Frances,—I know well that in recalling the days of your bright youth in your grand old home, the most prominent figure amongst those who surrounded you then must be that of your justly idolized mother; and I cannot help wishing to add my testimony, as of one unbiassed by family ties, to all that you possessed in her while she remained with you, and all that you so sadly lost when she was taken from you. To remember the *chatelaine* of Newbridge is to recall one of the fairest and sweetest memories of my early life. When I first saw that lovely, gracious lady with her almost angelic countenance and her perfect dignity of manner, I had just come from a gay Eastern capital,—my home from childhood, where no such vision of a typical English gentlewoman had ever appeared before me; and the impression she made upon me was therefore almost a revelation of what a refined, high-bred lady could be in all that was pure and lovely and of good report, and yet I think I only shared in the fascination which she exercised on all who came within the sphere of her influence. To me, almost a stranger, whom she welcomed as your friend under her roof, her exquisite courtesy would alone have been most charming; but for your sake she showed me all the tenderness of her sweet sympathetic nature, and it was no marvel to me that she was the idol of her children and the object of deepest respect and admiration to all who knew her.

Beautiful Newbridge with its splendid hospitality is like a dream to me now of what a gentleman's estate and country home could be in those days when ancient race and noble family traditions were still of some account.

Ever affectionately yours,
F. M. F. SKENE.

13 NEW INN HALL STREET, OXFORD.
Autobiography of Frances Power Cobbe.

LETTERS OF A SISTER.

To her Brother, James Freeman Clarke.

JUNE 11th (probably 1838).

My dear James,—I must give you a slightly dramatic sketch of what took place two days since:—

Scene, a dusty road in Cambridgeport. *Time,* two o'clock P.M. Weather hot. Two ladies driving in an old chaise with an old dusty horse with sandy gray hairs scattered over his surface. They approach a large building with a door in the side, but no visible window, which looks somewhat like a Methodist church. They consult anxiously: "Shall we go knock at that dead-looking door?" "What shall we do with the horse? where shall we tie him?" etc. They draw up to a fence. Meantime a majestic figure approaches, with gray locks floating gracefully in the wind.

1st Lady.—"Ah! there is Mr. Allston himself." (Jumps out.)

Mr. Allston (comes near).—"Ah, Miss Peabody, how do you do? Is Miss Clarke with you? I have expected you the two last Saturdays. But can you fasten your horse, for I know nothing about tying horses."

Both.—"Oh, yes, we can tie him." (Mr. A. goes and unlocks the painting-room door and invites them in. They enter.)

Scene 2d: A large, very large room of a dark red color, several easels standing about, canvases with their faces to the wall, a large scaffolding in the distance. In the foreground a table with colors, two or three chairs, and a fireplace with a fire burning in the grate.

Miss C.—"I have accepted your invitation, Mr. Allston, and brought my pictures for you to see. I hope to learn more from your criticism than to paint by myself a year."

Mr. A.—"I am very glad you have brought them. I shall be glad to assist you in any way in my power." (Lights a cigar.) (She places a small picture on the easel—your picture, James.) (Mr. A. looks at it and sits down before it.)

"This is very clever. What strikes me is the unity of tone you have preserved, so rare among young artists: it is not in patches, I mean" (turns round with a smile). "You have *it in you*" (looks again). "There is air here in the sky. What I do not like is these trees at the right hand which cut against the sky too hard. A tree so placed is very difficult to paint. There were but two artists who could do it, Titian and Claude. The Poussins, Nicolo nor Gaspar himself, could ever do it. You see there are so many things to be considered. There is first the local color of the leaves, then the light which shines through the edges of the leaves, then the reflected light from the sky upon the upper part of the leaves, then the refraction of the light through the leaves,—in short, the human figure is nothing to it. I will show you some trees of my own, half painted" (goes to a closet and takes out a picture of Una in the forest and places it on the easel). "It is in dead colors. You see the trees are just made out roughly and their characters defined more coarsely than will appear in the finishing. Now I shall glaze these trees with gold size, spirits of turpentine, and megilp. Taking the brush so, I lay it on so—swashy" (doing it in pantomime which you should have seen for a study, James). "You must lay it on roughly, on purpose, and the effect will surprise you. Then you want to paint the dark air in the forest—undefined and atmospheric. I made a discovery about this: I found that burnt umber and ultramine ashes, two semi-transparent colors, would just do it." (Goes on painting with a dry brush, much to the edification of his guest—it was a sort of Barmecide feast.) "Una here is to be in white drapery and luminous, making a sunshine in a shady place." (Goes to the fire and, stooping down, relights his cigar. While he is gone, Miss C. takes up the other picture they had brought and places it on the easel. Mr. A. comes back and looks at that, also).

Mr. Allston.—"Ah! Why, this I like better than the other. The same unity of tone, and this shows a feeling for nature. Miss Clarke" (turning round), "on such an occasion as this I should not hold myself justified in saying anything less or more than the truth exactly. I should do very wrong to say more than the truth, but I do not

hesitate to advise you to make landscape painting your profession. You will be successful in it, and you will find it a profitable profession. Thirty years ago I could not have said so much, but now a taste for landscape has awakened, and it is, to say the least, *fashionable*."

Miss C.—"I find great difficulties in the composition of a picture, and, if you knew how long I have been trying to paint, perhaps you would not think so favorably of these attempts."

Allston. "Long! That is nothing—at least I ought not to object to it. But this picture shows me that you have a sense of the unity of a picture. All these objects"—(sweeping his hand across) "tend to make it a whole. Nature is a whole, and not in bits; and this feeling should have kept you from admitting these five poplars, like five soldiers in a row. That hurts my eye. Nature did not plant these trees."

Miss C.—"I had some such thought myself and have once or twice meditated throwing out a branch across them."

Allston.—"No, that would not do it. You should have made the composition without it; and, notwithstanding the fiery colors of these trees, you have still preserved the keeping well."

Miss C.—"Do you think, Mr. Allston, it is allowable to paint the colors of autumn?"

Allston.—"No, though I cannot find a reason against it that satisfies myself. When I do, I will give it to you. I wrote an essay some years since in which I endeavored to explain this, and gave as a reason that the effect of Nature on the mind in general is that of a whole, and under these peculiar circumstances the general sense of oneness is lost in the detail. The effect of the autumn colors, it is true, is most enchanting, but a thousand unnoticed circumstances conspire to produce an effect upon the mind among real objects which a picture has not at command; but I am not quite satisfied myself with this reason" (goes to the closet and takes out another picture, a chalk sketch,—clearing off of a thunder-storm at sea, a brig in the offing, boat going off to take up shipwrecked seamen, waves dashing free, a large cauliflower-headed cloud in the midst receiving the sunlight, dark patch of cloud breaking across it, mist and rain still in the distance,—a fine, free, dramatic picture.)

Allston.—"If I could paint for my own pleasure, I should paint this" (producing a large picture of Titania's court by moonlight). "This is not a particular scene described by Shakespeare, but a composition from the whole of the description of the fairies in 'Midsummer Night's Dream.' Here you see Titania" (a fair figure with a luminous, starry crown upon her head), "with her Indian page kneeling to her and presenting her with a shell of water from the fountain." (The fairies dancing in a ring, tall forest trees behind, a cataract dashing down the right side of the picture and falling over the roots of old trees, then quietly creeps across the foreground.) "The moon here is not seen of course, but I mean to have a star or two peeping between these branches." (This is a finished drawing of a highly imaginative character: it is full of haunting associations.) (We express our admiration, and Miss P. holds up her watch at me which tells me that we have been an hour and more with him. I tell him I hope we have not spoiled the day. He assures us not, and asks me to come again, any Saturday, and I shall never interrupt him—and bring some things to show him. I gratefully promise, and we depart.)

I have not told you a fourth part of what he said when telling me how to paint trees and air; but, only think of it, what a good genius he was, and how unexpected his opinion of my powers! I hardly realized it for two or three days. I shall send you the little picture as soon as I can find an opportunity.

THE AMUSEMENT COLUMN.

[Address everything relating to the Amusement Column to Miss Kate L. Watson, Post-office Box 57, Worcester, Mass. Contributors are requested to write on one side of the paper only. Write name and address *plainly* (not necessarily for publication), and send the answers to the puzzles on a separate slip of paper.]

AN OLD PUZZLE.

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It will be seen that the ciphers composing this cross number *nine* from the base to the top, and from the base to the ends of the arms. Copy it on a slate or paper. Then erase three of the ciphers, make an additional one, and still have them number nine in those three directions.

II.

SQUARE WORD.

1. Of the best quality.
2. A thought.
3. Not far away.
4. A title of nobility.

K. L. W.

III.

HIDDEN BIRDS' NAMES.

1. The man who built this wall owes fifty dollars on it.
2. Let Alec row. Tom will steer.
3. That will do very well.
4. You know, rennet is used in making cheese.
5. The emblems are an asp, arrow, and circle.
6. Their names are Hyde, Ewing, and Ervine.

—*The Invalid Lady.*

IV.

RIDDLE.

I often murmur, yet I never weep;
I always lie in bed, but never sleep;
My mouth is wide, and larger than my head,
And much disgorges, though 'tis never fed;
I have no legs nor feet, yet swiftly run.
And the more falls I get the faster I move on.

—*Selected.*

V.

CHARADE.

Pray do not my first, or tiresome you will be;
My next comes unbidden, oft we wonder why;
My third is in music, and often is in balls;
My whole, an instrument, of days gone by.

—*Selected.*

VI.

1. What quadruped was made accidentally?
2. What is the difference between a fresh codfish and a receptacle for coal?
3. What is old every day and new every month? —*Contributed.*

Answers to Puzzles in the July Number.

I. 1. Sydney. 2. Constance. 3. Acre. 4. Charles. 5. Georgia. 6. Florence. 7. Adelaide. 8. Tom Holyoke. 9. Bull. 10. Wilkesbarre. 11. May. 12. Montgomery. 13. Black cashmere. 14. Sable. 15. Jersey. 16. White. 17. Red Saxony. 18. St. Stephen's. 19. St. John's. 20. St. Anne. 21. St. John. 22. Archangel. 23. St. Andrew's. 24. Longwood. 25. Sandwiches. 26. Bagdad (bag Dad). 27. Sydney. 28. Frankfort. 29. Quaker. 30. Gasperoux. 31. Saratoga. 32. Friendly. 33. Society. 34. Jerusalem. 35. Horn. 36. Race 37. Yorkshire. 38. Salmon. 39. White. 40. Green. 41. Washington 42. Canaries. 43. Cork. 44. Small. 45. Florence.

II. The Moon.

III. Glow-worm.

IV. CANNED GOODS.—1. Canterbury. 2. Canard. 3. Candid. 4. Canon. 5. Canoe. 6. Canary. 7. Candle.

V. His father.

VI. 1. Losing them as they go.

2. Because his head kept him from going too far.

HOUSEHOLD HINTS.

Fold a rug or strip of carpet to stand on while ironing, and see how it lessens the backache.

For a burn, cut, or rusty-nail wound, pour turpentine on at once. It will not hurt, and is a preventive of lockjaw, as I have experienced.

Rub the wringer rollers with a flannel cloth dampened with kerosene, and wash in soapy water, wipe dry, and put away until next wash-day, and you will be pleased with the results. MRS. A. L. P.

The Editor hopes that others will send notes and letters for this department. Not only recipes for the table will be welcome, but anything in the line of household economy,—anything that tends to smooth some of the difficulties of housekeeping. L. F. C.

THE CHEERFUL LETTER EXCHANGE.

OBJECTS.

1. To cheer and comfort the lonely and discouraged—not only invalids, but all who need cheer and comfort—by the interchange of letters and by gifts of books and periodicals.

2. To supply in some measure to young people in remote places the lack of schools, by gifts of school-books, letters, and, for those who desire it, correspondence classes on history, the natural sciences, and other interesting branches of study. If any desire to join such classes, they may send their names to our secretary.

3. Also to supply, to some extent, the lack of a church. One good sermon or sermon extract is printed in each number of the paper. These sermons are never doctrinal, but practical, and intended to cheer and comfort the sorrowful and aid in giving a vital religion without regard to sect or creed.

4. An important part of our mission is to mothers of young families, who feel the importance of their sacred charge and are anxious to learn all that can be known to make of their children good, upright, useful men and women,—good citizens of the country,—for which we must all work together if we would make it fulfil its mission among the nations of the world and to the races of mankind. We give books on subjects connected with the training of children, and our columns are open (in our "Mothers' Council") to all who have questions to ask or interesting suggestions to make on topics important to mothers.

Any minister (of any sect) who receives this paper is invited to write to our headquarters (see address on this page) and give names and addresses of those who may be cheered and helped by becoming our correspondents.

No *theology* is disseminated in our paper. All the religious matter is intended merely to strengthen, cheer, and comfort those in need of such practical help.

The Italian translation of *Black Beauty* may be obtained by travelers sailing for Italy, by addressing George T. Angell, 19 Milk St., Boston, Mass. 10 cts. a copy, paper.

Please send subscriptions to *Treasurer*, not to the *Editor*.

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Will those who would like to receive such instructions please send requests to Mrs. Ruth Peterson, 37 Ridgemont Street, Allston, Mass.

I have a correspondent who would like to receive the May, 1906, number of the *Ladies' Home Journal*, her number having been lost in the San Francisco earthquake. Please write to me for her address. (Miss) L. Freeman Clarke, Magnolia, Mass.

THE ATTENTION OF ALL READERS OF "THE CHEERFUL LETTER" IS CALLED TO THE FOLLOWING NOTICE:—

It is contrary to the rules of the Cheerful Letter Exchange to allow any one to make use of our paper by addressing letters, asking for money, clothing, or other articles, to those whose names are printed in the paper. This prohibition includes requests to borrow money and the offering of articles for sale. The name of any person who infringes this rule will be dropped from our list; and any one who receives a request of this description is desired by our Executive Committee to return no answer, but to enclose the letter at once to our secretary, Mrs. L. B. Porter.

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